

who have made plans for Christmas week to be here and elsewhere would not be disappointed and so that the Federal employees would not be basically disoriented during this Christmas week. And I offered some ideas about how we might reopen the Government and how we might resume our budget negotiations. And they agreed to take my ideas under advisement and to speak with each other, perhaps with others as well.

So I don't think I should talk about specifically what I said to them until I hear back from them. I think that would be wrong. I owe it to them, to have a chance to consider this in a confidential matter on their own time.

Q. Did you invite them to come over here to sit down with you and try to resolve this?

The President. I talked about how we could get together and my personal willingness to be involved. But I'd rather not talk about the specifics of it until I hear back from them.

Q. Do you think they'll respond tonight?

The President. I just don't know. I hope so. I want the Congress to open the Government again. This is not—this whole action is without precedent. I think we should stop it, and we should go back to the ordinary way of dealing with this.

I have demonstrated, I think, repeatedly that I am committed to balancing the budget. I have shown that I will put forward a plan in 7 years. I have told them that I will work with them. And I will work with them, and I believe we can do it. But we ought to reopen the Government, the Congress should, for the benefit of the American people, especially this week. We shouldn't—this week the people and the employees should not be subject to this Government closing.

Q. Are you willing to have them over here as early as tonight, Mr. President?

The President. Well, I'd like to give them the chance to get back to me. I think it's important that I not talk anymore about the contents of my conversation until they have a chance to consider it and get back to me.

Q. Are you more encouraged, though, by what you heard in this phone call that the Government can get back to working 100 percent?

The President. I hope so. That's all I can say. I hope so.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:35 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Memorandum on Federal Arrestee Drug Testing

December 18, 1995

Memorandum for the Attorney General

Subject: Development of the Administration's Federal Arrestee Drug Testing Policy

Illegal drugs plague our communities, causing despair and illness, and, most importantly, contributing significantly to unacceptable levels of crime and violence. More than half of all individuals brought into the Nation's criminal justice system have substance abuse problems. Too often, the same criminal drug users cycle through the court, corrections, and probation systems still hooked on drugs and still committing crimes to support their habit.

We can and will continue to prosecute and convict these criminal drug users. Yet our criminal justice system must do more to try to reduce drug use. Across the country, employers have accepted their corporate responsibility to reduce the levels of drug use within their workplaces.

So too, the agencies of our criminal justice system must do their part, giving criminal drug users powerful incentives to stay off drugs by putting a high price on continued drug use. These incentives—commonly referred to as “coerced abstinence”—should be applied at the earliest possible stage in a person's interaction with the criminal justice system—following arrest.

To ensure that we are doing all we can to break the cycle of drugs and crime, I am directing you to develop a universal policy providing for drug testing of all Federal arrestees before decisions are made on whether to release them into the community pending trial. I further direct that you establish a policy whereby Federal prosecutors will seek appropriate measures for arrestees who fail pretrial drug tests.

The Federal criminal justice system should serve as a model for State criminal justice systems—where the majority of criminal cases are processed and the cycle of repeat drug-related offenders is most evident. Therefore, I am also directing you to take all appropriate steps to encourage States to adopt and implement the same policies that we are initiating at the Federal level.

You should report to me in writing by March 31, 1996, on the specific steps you will take to implement this policy.

William J. Clinton

Remarks on Signing the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 and an Exchange With Reporters

December 19, 1995

The President. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Today, after two decades of gridlock, I am very proud to be able to sign this legislation to bring lobbying in Washington into the sunlight of public scrutiny.

Last year when lobbying reform legislation was filibustered to death, there were lobbyists crowded outside the Senate Chamber who literally cheered. Today, I sign that bill into law. And that's something for the American people to cheer about.

I want to begin by thanking those whose efforts made this possible. And their efforts were constant, longstanding, and carried on, I might add, from time to time under great duress.

First, let me say I believe this new law to bring lobbying into the open would never have happened without the leadership of Senator Carl Levin. The first conversation that he and I had after I was elected President was about this legislation, and therefore in a very real sense this lobby reform law is a monument to the years and years of effort that Carl Levin has made. And I thank you, Senator, for that.

There are many, many other Members of Congress in both parties who played a pivotal role in enacting this needed reform. Many of them are here today, and I want to thank them. I want to thank Senator Cohen and Senator Wellstone. And I want to thank Congressman Bryant, Congressman Canady,

Congressman Frank, Congressman Fazio, Congressman McHale, Congressman Chris Shays, Congressman Goss, Congressman Doggett, and Congressman Barrett, who was not able to be here today.

On this matter, Democrats and Republicans acted together to put the public interest before partisanship. And they faced withering pressure to do otherwise. This law is also a testament to the thousands of citizens who were members of groups lobbying for this, members of Common Cause, Public Citizen, and many other groups, who have sought to make real the promise of our democracy. It is also, frankly, a testament to the efforts of thousands of citizens who belong to no particular group but who showed up at town meetings that these members and others had all across our country. They were Republicans and Democrats and independents, people who wanted this kind of change, real change, for a very, very long time.

Lobbying has its rightful place in our system. I believe every Member here and every Member who voted for this bill understands that and understands what a valuable role lobbying can play in the American system. At one time or another, just about every American citizen has wanted to be a lobbyist before the Congress on one issue or another.

But ordinary Americans also understand that organized interests too often can hold too much sway in the halls of power. They know that in Washington an influence industry too often operates in secret and gets special privileges not available to most Americans. Lobbyists in the back room secretly rewriting laws and looking for loopholes do not have a place in our democracy. All the people should know what is done by people who affect public decisions.

I ran for President in large measure to renew our democracy, to give ordinary Americans a greater stake in our Government. I strongly called for reform measures, including this bill, from the very beginning. Shortly after I took office, I implemented the toughest ethics code on executive officials in our history, barring senior appointees from lobbying their own agencies for 5 years after leaving office and from ever lobbying for foreign governments. We repealed the tax loophole that let lobbyists deduct the cost of their